



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

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## Croatia

## Biotechnology

## Law Now Being Drafted

## 2001

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**Report Highlights:** Croatia has established a biotechnology committee to write regulations covering the use and release of genetically modified crops. A draft law is expected this Fall. Croatia's Environment Minister would like to make Croatia GMO free.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Vienna [AU1], HR

Since 1997, Croatian scientists have been working with multinational companies to conduct field trials of genetically modified herbicide-tolerant and pest-resistant corn. These experiments have been criticized because they have taken place without a clear framework of government biosafety regulations or the consent of the Health Ministry or Environmental Directorate. The parliament, in 1998, recommended that the Government declare a moratorium on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and create a Bioethics Committee. While the government did not institute a ban, they did establish a Bioethics Committee.

Recently, Bozo Kovacevic, the Croatian Minister for Environmental Protection and Urban development, declared that he will ask the Parliament to adopt a law banning the export, use and production of GMO products. This declaration coincides with the Bioethics Committee's current drafting of a GMO law. Reportedly, the Committee has agreed not to release any information to the public regarding the law until its completion in September. The Committee itself is comprised of 25 members, which include representatives from scientific, non-government organizations (NGOs) and consumer groups. The Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, Science and Technology and Health will also be involved in drafting the law.

Comment: All parties are waiting for the draft law to be unveiled in September and NGOs opposed to biotechnology have already met with members of the Croatian government. Some NGOs view modern biotechnology as a threat to agricultural producers in Croatia and they point Croatia's predominance of small farms and the potential of organic agricultural exports. Other observers highlight the current political environment and elections. The GMO issue has, according to some, become a tool for gathering support when most issues are polarized between left and rightist parties. Croatian officials working on the legislation are paying close attention to the current public discussion and political wrangling.